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President Moves to Curb Unauthorized Disclosures

By PHIL GAILLEY

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 12 — President Reagan, asserting that unauthorized disclosures of classified material had hampered the conduct of foreign policy, today ordered a series of measures to protect national security information.

In a statement released by the White House, Mr. Reagan said the unauthorized disclosure of classified information had become a "problem of major proportions" and vowed to use "all legal means" to identify and discipline officials who violated the new rules.

The President ordered that these steps be taken:

¶Any official involved in national security policy will be required to obtain approval from a senior official before talking to a reporter. After the interview, the official will have to write a memorandum on what matters were discussed.

¶The number of officials with access to national security and intelligence information will be kept "to the minimum essential to the orderly conduct of the Government's business," the statement said.

¶When an unauthorized disclosure occurs, all Government employees with access to the information will be subject to investigation. Mr. Reagan said "all legal means" would be used to identify the source of the disclosure. White House officials declined to elaborate.

The President's directive will apply to all national security officials in the executive branch, including those in the State and Defense Departments.

In his statement, Mr. Reagan said he was mindful of the Constitution's guarantees on freedom of the press and individual liberties and said he would attempt to carry out the directive in "a balanced and careful manner."

"I do not believe, however," Mr. Reagan added, "that the Constitution entitles Government employees, entrusted with confidential information critical to the functioning and effectiveness of the Government, to disclose such information with impunity. Yet this is precisely the situation we have. It must not be allowed to continue."

David R. Gergen, White House communications director, said some of the disclosures that had caused the President to act had resulted in the compromise of sensitive intelligence sources and information, including some cases where lives were endangered.

Disclosure on Taiwan Cited

Pressed for an example, Mr. Gergen cited the disclosure of the Administration's decision not to sell advanced military aircraft to Taiwan.

He said the details for the enforcement of the new policy were still being worked out, such as whether the Federal Bureau of Investigation would be used

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National Security Statement

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 12 — Following is the text of a statement by President Reagan on protection of classified National Security Council and intelligence information:

Unauthorized disclosure of classified information under the jurisdiction of the National Security Council and of classified intelligence reports is a problem of major proportions within the U.S. Government.

The Constitution of the United States provides for the protection of individual rights and liberties, including freedom of speech and freedom of the press, but it also requires that Government functions be discharged efficiently and effectively, especially where the national security is involved.

As President of the United States, I am responsible for honoring both Constitutional requirements, and I intend to do so in a balanced and careful manner. I do not believe, however, that the Constitution entitles Government employees, entrusted with confidential information critical to the functioning and effectiveness of the Government, to disclose such information with impunity. Yet this is precisely the situation we have. It must not be allowed to continue.

To this end, I hereby establish and direct implementation of the following policies.

CONTACTS WITH THE MEDIA: All contacts with any element of the news media in which classified National Security Council matters or classified intelligence information are discussed will require the advance approval of a senior official. An administrative memorandum will be prepared as soon as possible after the contact, recording the subjects discussed and

all information provided to the media representatives.

ACCESS: The unauthorized disclosure of classified National Security Council information, documents, and deliberations requires further control to limit access and to ensure an accurate record of those who have had access. The number of officials with access to documents relating to N.S.C. matters will be kept to the minimum essential to the orderly conduct of the Government's business.

INVESTIGATIONS: The Government's lack of success in identifying the sources of unauthorized disclosure of classified National Security Council information and documents of classified intelligence information must be remedied and appropriate disciplinary measures taken. Henceforth, in the event of unauthorized disclosure of such information, Government employees who have had access to that information will be subject to investigation, to include the use of all legal methods.

APPLICABILITY AND IMPLEMENTATION: The provisions of this directive shall be effective immediately and shall apply to all employees of, and elements within agencies participating in the National Security Council system, including the Executive Office of the President. The assistant to the President for national security affairs is directed to establish the detailed procedures to implement policies.

to investigate violations and how to restrict the number of officials with access to classified information.

Mr. Gergen, in response to questions, said the Administration did not anticipate "a vast expansion of classified information" under the policy, which he said would apply to material ranging from "top secret" to "confidential."

Beyond that, White House officials said Mr. Reagan felt that the disclosures were hampering the Administration's ability to conduct foreign policy. In a supporting statement released at the same time by the White House, William P. Clark Jr., the President's new national security adviser, said that in some cases the publication of classified

information "rules out a foreign policy option, or jeopardizes an ongoing policy."

Mr. Clark said that reporters had been doing a better job of collecting classified information than Government officials had in protecting it, adding, "These limited measures are designed to restore a balance that has been lost."

Asked if Mr. Reagan was following the example of President Nixon, who authorized a group called the "White House plumbers" to investigate "leaks" to the media, Mr. Gergen replied, "Every President has been concerned about this problem. Every President has taken remedial steps to deal with it. This President is attempting to do it."